

## ***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** April 14, 2011

**Agenda Item:** Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program Strategic Plan

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Proposed Endorsement

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 1 hour

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### **Background**

FWP administers the statewide Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program (UGBEP). The UGBEP is organized into two separate component programs: (1) Upland Game Bird Release Program, and (2) Upland Game Bird Habitat Enhancement Program.

The principle outcomes of the UGBEP are pheasant and turkey releases; establishment or enhancement of upland game bird habitat; conservation of valuable game bird habitats; and enhanced public upland game bird hunting opportunities.

In 2008 and 2009, the UGBEP underwent a legislative performance audit. One of the outcomes identified through the audit was the recommendation that FWP develop a long-term UGBEP strategic management plan with clearly defined management controls. That draft plan, developed by the legislatively authorized citizens' advisory council, is being presented to the FWP Commission today for endorsement. This represents the first formal UGBEP strategic management plan.

The legislative audit report identified the need for a citizens' advisory council whose primary purpose would be to advise FWP on the development of the UGBEP strategic program plan. HB 499 passed the 61st Montana State Legislature in 2009 and revises certain laws related to the UGBEP. Through this legislation, FWP was directed to: (1) establish a citizens' advisory council, with appointment made by the FWP Director, and (2) develop a strategic program plan.

To reach its full potential, the UGBEP will benefit from the implementation of a strategic-program plan that identifies long-term goals and objectives with performance measurements that align with statutory requirements. The council will remain in place to annually assess program implementation and effectiveness.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

The 12-member council was appointed and first convened in July 2009. Meeting approximately every two months in various locations throughout the state, the council has visited habitat enhancement projects and held public comment sessions. Original council members include Mike Begley – Billings, Terry Comstock – Eureka, Julie French – Scobey, Jay Gore – Missoula, Bernie Hart – Hinsdale, Gordon Haugen – Bozeman, Bill Howell – West Yellowstone, Mike Jensen – Plentywood, Joe Perry (acting chair) – Brady, Craig Roberts – Lewistown, Senator Jim Shockley – Victor, and Dale Tribby – Miles City.

Council recommendations will be presented to the FWP Commission for proposed endorsement on April 14. Public comment will run through June 6. Any final endorsement will take place in July.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move the FWP Commission endorse the proposed Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program Strategic Plan as presented.